

9 November 1951

Mr. David Lawrence, Editor
U. S. News & World Report
24th & N Streets, N. W.
Washington 7, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lawrence:

The attached brief answers three of the questions put to you by [redacted] in his letter of October 31st. His questions number 3 and 4 cannot be answered for reasons of security.

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As a matter of fact, the Act creating the Central Intelligence Agency, while very short, is fairly self-explanatory. You will pardon me if I say that I wish the compiler of the "Washington Alphabet", in the October 12th issue of U.S. News - World Report, had read it before he produced his definition of CIA, which could hardly have been more inaccurate.

Faithfully,

SIGNED

Walter B. Smith
Director

Enclosure

WBS/dr

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To meet the need for an integrated system of intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency was established by Congress in Section 102 of the National Security Act of 1947. Under this Act, CIA was assigned three broad missions: (1) to advise the National Security Council regarding the intelligence activities of the Government and make recommendations for their coordination; (2) to provide for the central correlation, evaluation and dissemination of intelligence relating to the national security; and (3) to insure the performance, centrally, subject to National Security Council direction, of certain intelligence and related functions of common concern to various departments of the Government.

Under the first mission, CIA becomes in effect the coordinator of the intelligence activities of the Government. For example, in performing its duty of advising on the coordination of intelligence activities, the Central Intelligence Agency may recommend to the National Security Council the means to be employed in the assembly of reports and estimates requisite for the performance by the Agency of its second duty, the correlation of national intelligence. As another example, the Central Intelligence Agency might recommend that a particular intelligence function be performed henceforth by the Agency itself under its third duty of providing services of common concern more efficiently accomplished centrally.

The second mission is the coordination and evaluation of intelligence. In performing this mission, CIA acts as an assembly

plant to fit together the specialized contributions received from the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, Department of State, etc., each furnishing intelligence information which lies within its particular competence. These contributions are brought together and carefully reviewed on the staff level and final evaluation is made by a group consisting of the chiefs of the intelligence divisions of the several Government departments, under the chairmanship of the Director of Central Intelligence. The final results is transmitted to the National Security Council in the form of a National Intelligence Estimate. This procedure provides for the examination and interpretation of intelligence and the coordination of the best intelligence opinion in the country based on all available information. The resultant Estimates provide intelligence bases for the consideration of Government policy.

The third mission of the CIA is to provide services of common concern which in the judgment of the National Security Council are best performed centrally. These services can be divided between those of a research nature, such as some aspects of economic or scientific intelligence, and certain services of collection.

The Central Intelligence Agency is not a subdivision of any other Government department. It reports to the National Security Council and through this body to the President, who chairs the National Security Council.

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